Chairman Lehner and Honorable Members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide opponent testimony for Senate Bill 121. My name is Suzanne Steed and I am a mother to two precious children. It has been brought to my attention that SB121 aims to adopt national health standards in Ohio schools. I would like to outline why I object to the adoption of national health education standards.

1) Currently Ohio law (ORC 3313.60) requires local school districts to establish health education curriculum which includes nutrition, drug abuse, venereal diseases, personal safety, healthy relationships, etc. If Ohio already has established health education curriculum, why is adopting national health standards needed? Any change in the ORC would require the changes to go through the legislative process and give the opportunity for public comment. SB121 repeals a provision that requires both the House and Senate education committees to conduct at least one public hearing on the standards, curriculum, or revisions prior to voting on the concurrent resolution. As a parent, that is very concerning. This also would allow special interest groups to influence health standards that are being taught to our children and cut out parental concerns and voices.

2) I have listened to proponent testimony of SB121. The testimonies provided eye-opening statistics on the health of our youth.  Proponent testimony simply assumed that by adopting national health education standards, somehow these staggering health statistics would improve. Supporting testimony stated Ohio was the only state that did not have health standards. If all other states have established health standards, shouldn’t there be easily accessible information on how obesity, pre-diabetes, childhood diabetes, etc. have improved in the other 49 states? Support testimony just assumed that adopting national health standards would translate to better health outcomes in Ohio students; without providing any proof or tangible evidence.

3)  Most importantly, this legislation fails to address real health concerns, such as low-quality food served at public schools. (My son with autism is not allowed to eat their substandard food and has healed immensely on a healthy organic diet as a result of this.) Simply adopting standards will not improve the health of our children. Changing the diet, increasing physical activity, and continuing to teach students with their currently established health curriculum will produce healthier children that make good decisions regarding their health.

Members of the Senate Education Committee, please oppose SB121. Adopting national health standards will not improve the health of our children. This legislation is not needed as a required health curriculum is already outlined in the ORC, and most importantly this legislation will cut out the voice of parents who play the most vital role in determining health outcomes for their children.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Steed